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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Monday, October 17, 1932.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

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Subject: "Canning Poultry for Economy." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. D.A.

As we were saying last Friday, most people who have poultry flocks find at this time of year, that some of their birds won't pay their room and board during the winter. Many hens, no longer at their best for egg production, may as well spend the winter in cans on the pantry shelf as to eat up expensive feed month after month. A supply of canned chicken is a great convenience to any housewife. It's ready with no fussing when last-minute guests drop in or on busy days like wash day when you want to get up a quick meal.

Fortunately, the older fowls--generally the very ones you don't want to keep, are best for canning. Plump, well-fed hens, two-years old, have as good a texture and even better flavor when canned than tender chickens six months old. You see, you have to use exactly the same canning process whether the chicken is young or old. And if you can the very young tender birds, the meat is likely to overcook with the high heat needed for sterilization.

Canning specialists at the Bureau of Home Economics have made a special study of the safe, economical way to can chickens at home. I'm going to describe the various steps in this process today--give you a general idea of how to do the job. But I can't really give you the whole story over the air. If you plan to save your chickens by canning, you'll need reliable printed directions by your side. The Bureau of Home Economics has a mimeographed sheet of directions that you can have if you'll write me for it.

The quality of canned poultry very naturally depends on the condition of the fresh poultry and the way you prepare and can it. As soon as the animal heat has disappeared--usually about six to eight hours after killing, the fowl is ready for canning. Delicious, wholesome canned poultry can only come from wholesome fresh poultry. Poultry, like all other meat, has a compact texture that makes heat penetration slow in the cans. So you need a very high temperature for sterilizing it in the cans--temperatures from 240 to 250 degrees, F., which, by the way, are far above the boiling point of water. You can only get this high temperature by canning under steam pressure. This is why the specialists say that all poultry--or any other meat--must be canned in the steam pressure cooker. That's the only safe way. If you haven't a pressure cooker, can't you borrow one for this job? If you can't borrow one, better not try to put up meat.

Now let's talk over the canning process, step by step. The first step is to get the chicken ready. You prepare the chicken for canning just as you would for cooking. Then disjoint and cut it into the usual pieces. Remove the giblets and eggs since you don't use these in canning.

The very bony parts like the feet, the back and the neck, which you'll cut off close to the body, these parts won't be canned. You'll use them for making



the broth to fill up the jars. Skin these bony pieces, put them in a kettle and cover them with lightly salted cold water. Bring the water to the simmering point and then simmer for 15 minutes. This hot broth you'll pour into the jars after you have packed the hot meat in. I might add right here that the chicken will go into clean hot jars or into clean tin cans.

When the chicken is ready for canning, your next step is to preheat it. The object of preheating is simply to heat the meat thoroughly, not to cook it. You see, if you cook it until it's done, and then can it, the canning process will overcook it.

By the way, I meant to speak of the containers before this. You can use either tin cans or pint glass jars. Pint jars, not quart jars. The large jars don't allow the heat to penetrate so readily and sterilization is not so certain unless you use a longer heating process.

When you are packing the chicken into the containers, be sure to put some pieces containing bone in each one. Don't cram the meat in for that will pack it so tightly that the broth can't circulate freely in the jar.

You can do the pre-heating in several ways. Here is one good way. Put the pieces of chicken in a kettle with a small quantity of boiling water. Then lower the heat and simmer until each piece is heated through. After heating, pack it at once in cans or jars. Then bring the broth to boiling and pour it over the meat to within one-half inch from the top of the container. Add salt--1/2 teaspoon to each pint. Some people use a small quantity of gelatin in the broth. A tablespoon of gelatin, softened in a little cold water and then dissolved in the broth is the right amount for each pint of chicken.

When you have poured the broth on, seal the tin can completely, but seal the glass jars only partially. As soon as you seal each jar, put it at once in the hot pressure cooker so the meat won't have a chance to cool off. Now fasten on the top of the cooker and begin the processing.

I won't try to tell you how many minutes and how much pressure each variety of container takes. Your meat canning guide will give you those exact figures.

I'll just tell the end of the story. After processing glass jars or No. 3 tin cans, allow the pressure gauge to reach zero before you open the petcock on the canner. Then open it gradually so the steam won't rush out suddenly. Now complete the seal on glass jars, and place them in the open air, but protect them from draft until they're cool. Tin cans you can put at once in running water to cool. With the smaller tin cans you can open the petcock on the pressure cooker gradually at the end of the processing and allow the steam to escape.

There. That's the story of canning chicken at home according to scientific methods. But I've talked too long. So I haven't time now to tell you about the Monday economy menu. But I promise to give you that menu tomorrow, also I'll answer some of your recent questions.

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